Information regarding the instruction of the Hon'ble High Court on conservation of ponds is not available with the Ministry of Water Resources.

(b) As per information from Ground Water Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh, a total of 51488 ponds have been restored/conserved.

(c) and (d) Government of India has undertaken steps to check depletion in the level of ground water by adopting measures through rain water harvesting and artificial recharge. These include circulation of a Model Bill for enactment of suitable legislation, circulation of manual to formulate area specific schemes, preparation of Master Plan for artificial recharge, constitution of Central Ground Water Authority under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for regulation and control of ground water management and development, implementation of Central sector schemes for study of artificial recharge to ground water in the country during IX & XI Plans etc.

Dam on Neelam River

†2226. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a project to carry water upto Jhelum river by constructing dam at Neelam river in the illegally occupied territory in Kashmir is being formulated by Pakistan;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and whether it is also a fact that construction work of this project has been assigned to Chinese agencies;

(c) if so, the facts thereof and whether it is a step forward to create a new crisis towards security of Indian borders; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes. The proposed Neelam-Jhelum Project is situated in Muzaffarabad district of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. Government are aware of reports that the construction contract of the project has been awarded to a Chinese consortium.

(c) and (d) The Indus Commissioner of the Government of India has asked the Government of Pakistan for an inspection visit to the Neelam Valley. The Government of Pakistan are yet to arrange the visit. Government keep a constant watch on developments having a bearing on India's security and take necessary measures to safeguard it.

Impact of Hyde Act on Nuclear Deal

†2227. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that U.S.A. has passed Hyde Act in recent last years;

(b) if so, whether U.S.A. has passed this act after proposal of 123 agreement under nuclear deal with India;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if not, the facts thereof and time when this act was passed in U.S.A.;

(d) whether this act is meant for empowering U.S.A. administration with regard to nuclear issue; and

(e) if so, facts thereof and its impact on the 123 agreement?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) Yes. This Hyde Act, is enabling legislation passed by the US Congress and signed into law by President Bush on December 18, 2006 as part of its commitment under the 18 July 2005 Joint Statement, to amend its laws to enable the US Government to enter into full civil nuclear cooperation with India. Following the passage of the Hyde Act, India was exempted from the requirements of Section 123(a)(2) of the US Atomic Energy Act, 1954 that requires full-scope safeguards as a condition for civil nuclear cooperation with US. The Hyde Act is domestic legislation of the United States. India's rights and obligation regarding civil nuclear cooperation with the US arise only from the 123 Agreement that we have agreed upon with the US.

Successful test of K-15 Missile

†2228. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has made efforts to know reaction of other countries after successful test of nuclear enabled missile K-15 missile recently;

(b) if so, reaction of the major countries of the world; and

(c) the activities accelerated by Government after the said use, with regard to grant to 'nuclear State' status to India?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government monitor international reactions to developments impinging on our national security. No official statement by any other country on the test has come to Government's notice.

(c) Government are committed to maintaining a credible minimum deterrent with an indigenous missile capability as an integral element of that policy. As a part of our indigenous missile programme, tests continue to be conducted for a range of systems as and when required from the technological perspective. Government have no intention of getting drawn into an arms race.

Protocol on exchange of prisoners

2229. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SMT. SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the protocol on the exchange of prisoners between India and Pakistan is not working since Pakistan is interested to take back only hardcore terrorists;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether Pakistan's prisoners who are lodged in Indian jails for minor offences are not accepted to them; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.